





JAMES L. AMOS

"The Dutch don't like to wear diamonds," Asscher told me, "because they don't like to show off, but they do like to buy them as an investment."

Benno Premssela, descendant of a Polish-Jewish family that found refuge in Amsterdam in the 17th century, survived the Nazi persecution by hiding out in his native city for four years. Now a noted interior and industrial designer and successful businessman, he is a utopian socialist who seeks to integrate all minorities, sexual, racial, and political.

"We are a progressive city," he told me. "We are experimenting, changing. Catholic priests are renouncing celibacy. I wish our rabbis were that open to change. Our TV stations are privately owned and very educational, the freest in Europe. Everything has been seen on TV in this country, even an abortion. Now we have just had a program on relations outside of marriage. The situation is wide open."

Famed Neighborhood Offers Sin and Salvation

Wide open is the phrase for Amsterdam's notorious red-light district, where the girls pose in picture windows in the lovely old canal houses of the Oude Zijds Voorburgwal, now garish with neon signs. In the midst of this neighborhood stands the headquarters of the Salvation Army.

Here, in a typical old Dutch interior with an Oriental rug on the table and with mullioned windows casting a mosaic of pale-green and amethyst light on the tile floor, I had tea with Lt. Col. A. M. Bosshardt. A strong-minded woman, she wore a badge that summed up her quality in a word: GOODWILL. Colonel Bosshardt has been ministering for 40 years to the sick, the homeless, the dispirited, the lonely, and the lost.

"There are about 3,000 girls in this district, selling love," she said. "What a delusion! Who can buy love? We know them all. They accept us, we accept them, they come to us for help. Most of the people who patronize these places are from out of town, provincials and tourists having a fling."

"Does it offend you that it's so blatant?"